

PART X: Bay Buildout – The Next Wave

Bay in the Balance



By DEBORA BABIN KATZ

Is Duxbury outgrowing Duxbury Bay?

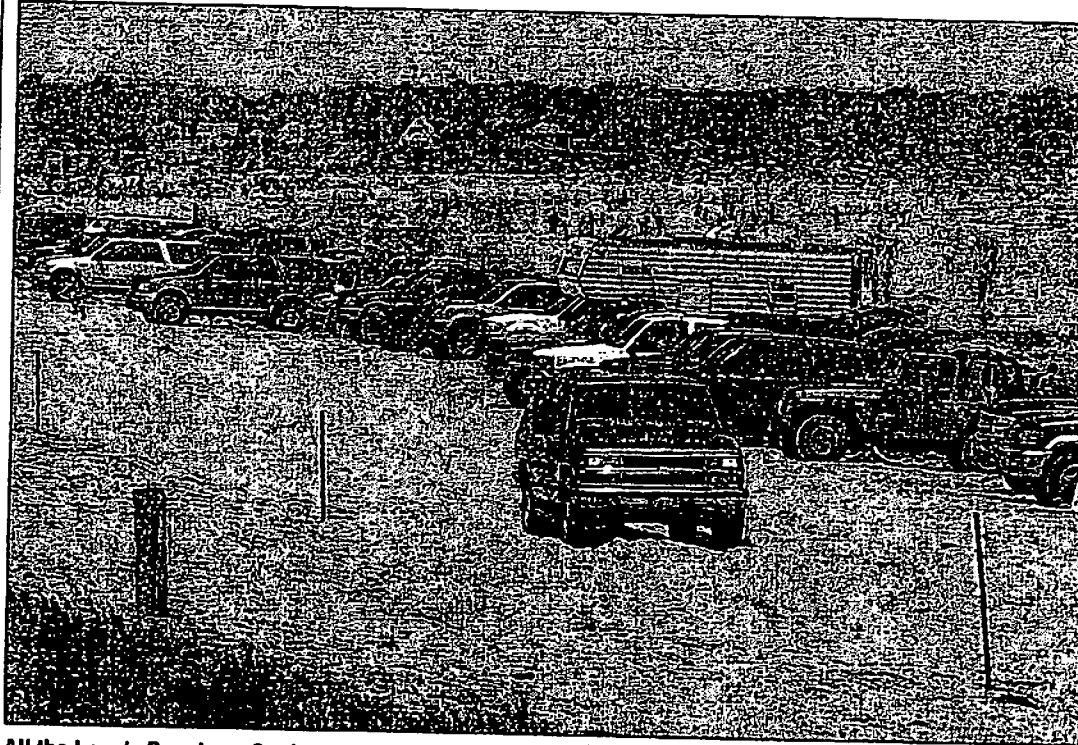
The question, barely viable a generation ago, now underscores the unending pressures that bear on the bay, from aquaculture, to marine boating, to beach pollution, to the pro-

See
editorial
page 10

liferation of piers and moorings, to the protection of birds, to overfishing, to the incessant

crowding on Duxbury Beach. In almost every area, there is a push for more leading one to wonder: How much is too much before we must detach the word "pristine" when describing our watery playground?

It is no secret that many Duxbury residents are worried. Be they concerned citizens or local leaders, many realize that we must act now to protect what we have or forever lose it.



All the Lovely People — Sunbathers et al jammed Duxbury Beach this summer on an oppressively hot July 4th. Green Harbor, in the background, seems positively serene.

Photo by David Grossman

started at Battelle in 1977, and looked out the conference window in the summer the boats ended up by Jack Kent's. Now they go all the way passed that and come down beyond Water Street."

Jack Kent of Bayside Marine attributes the phenomenon to an increase in disposable income. "There are certainly more boats out there on the bay today. I think that is due to more

wait," said Dennis Parse, executive officer of the harbormaster's office.

This year, Howland's Landing off Captain's Hill was at full capacity with 86 deep water moorings, costing \$3.50 per foot, and has a new waiting list with seven applicants. "In years past," said Pearce, "no one really wanted to go over there and there was never a need, but with the economy and people buying boats left and right, the need for space increased and that's where a lot of people ended up going."

Moreover, there are now 166 permits issued for tidal flats moorings and they're located all over the town's waterways, said Pearce. They cost a flat rate of \$6 and are located at the Back River, Bluefish River, King Caesar Beach, Windsor Street, Water Street, Josselyn Avenue, Shipyard Lane, Eagle's Nest, Standish Shore, Bay Road and Clark's Island.

"There's been a considerable increase in the number of boats since I came to Long Point Marine," said general manager Larry Martin who started at the marina 29 years ago. Long Point, owned by Dwight Smith, is one of Duxbury's oldest marinas, dating to mid-1930s when William Watson Taylor started the boatyard and built Duck Class sailboats. Today, the marina specializes in custom-built yachts, and dry docks 185 boats during the winter.

Besides moorings, there are also visiting boaters to Duxbury Bay who obtain temporary moorings through the harbormaster's office during their stay. Other boaters come for day trips. The number of recreational boats cruising the bay ranges anywhere from 100 to 600 boats on a busy day depending on weather and what day of the week it is, said Pearce. The harbormaster's three patrol boats are in use



Stacked — At Bayside Marine, powerboats are piled high on boat racks scattered throughout the yard. Last winter, Bayside stored 108 boats.

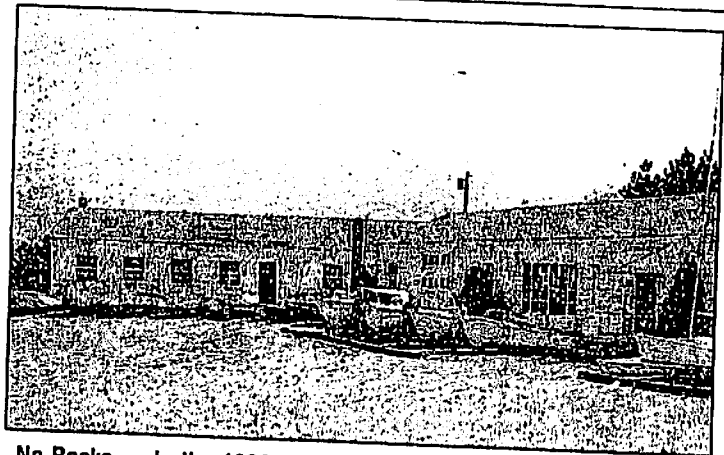
"We are realizing that we may be at capacity," said Duxbury Conservation Commissioner Joe Grady. "No one wants to be the bad guy, and ruin things for people," he said, "but we need to address the environmental issues regarding such uses...and the question becomes 'who do you shut off?' and who is going to say it?"

Mooring Madness

From her vantage at Battelle's, Joan Sundstrom, director of the institute's human resources, has had a first-hand look at the push for more mooring space. "Look at the number of boats today; when I first

people with more money than years ago." Kent should know; his Dad, Jack Kent, Sr., moved the family business in 1960 from Hall's Corner to its current location off Washington Street.

By this August, the basin flats, with a possible 432 mooring locations, had 381 assigned moorings at cost of \$4.50 per foot. Twenty-one years ago, there were only 151 basin flats moorings assigned, and the sought after basin deep water moorings, then 160 spots, were all allocated. Today, "there is a waiting list for basin deep water moorings that is estimated to be a 12 to 15 year



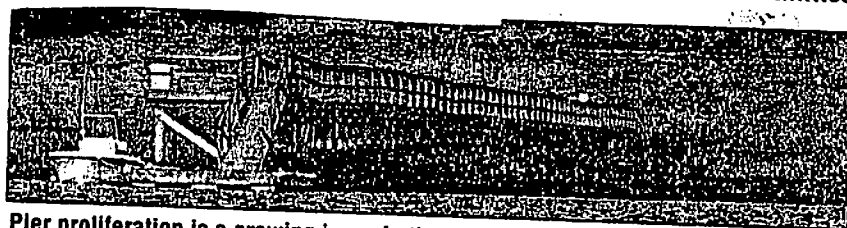
No Racks — In the 1960s, Bayside Marine had more than enough room for boat storage.

(Courtesy J.R. Kent)

dent Bill TenFloor, the seven-member committee has met regularly to identify the issues related to piers and to formulate recommendations for next town meeting.

"The issues fall into three categories, said committee member John Hagerty: "Public access, public safety, and neighborhood character." Public access relates to piers that are a detriment to a public landing or way. Safety issues arise when a pier's location and length cause problems for other users' navigation or use of the shoreline. Then there is the issue of how a pier affects public vistas, or damages the area's aesthetics. Of course, "that's a very subjective thing," said Hagerty. The issue is whether a pier affects the ability to see public sites, like Clark's Island for example, he said.

The committee has interviewed officials from 55 towns in Massachusetts with "comparable situations" to Duxbury. "We have compiled the information for best practices regarding piers," said Hagerty. These findings will be used with the committee's other project—the development of an electronic map with global positioning points of the bay's shoreline—to make recommendations. The committee



Pier proliferation is a growing issue in the bay.

Photo by David Grossman

constantly on those days, he added.

Pier Proliferation

This year town meeting voters authorized a pier study committee and allocated \$10,000 for professional expertise and research. Headed up by resi-

has hired a helicopter for aerial photography of Duxbury's shore front parcels, and put that information into the electronic map.

"The town felt they had 70 piers based on applications, but what the committee identified through this process was 108

Wednesday, October 23, 2002

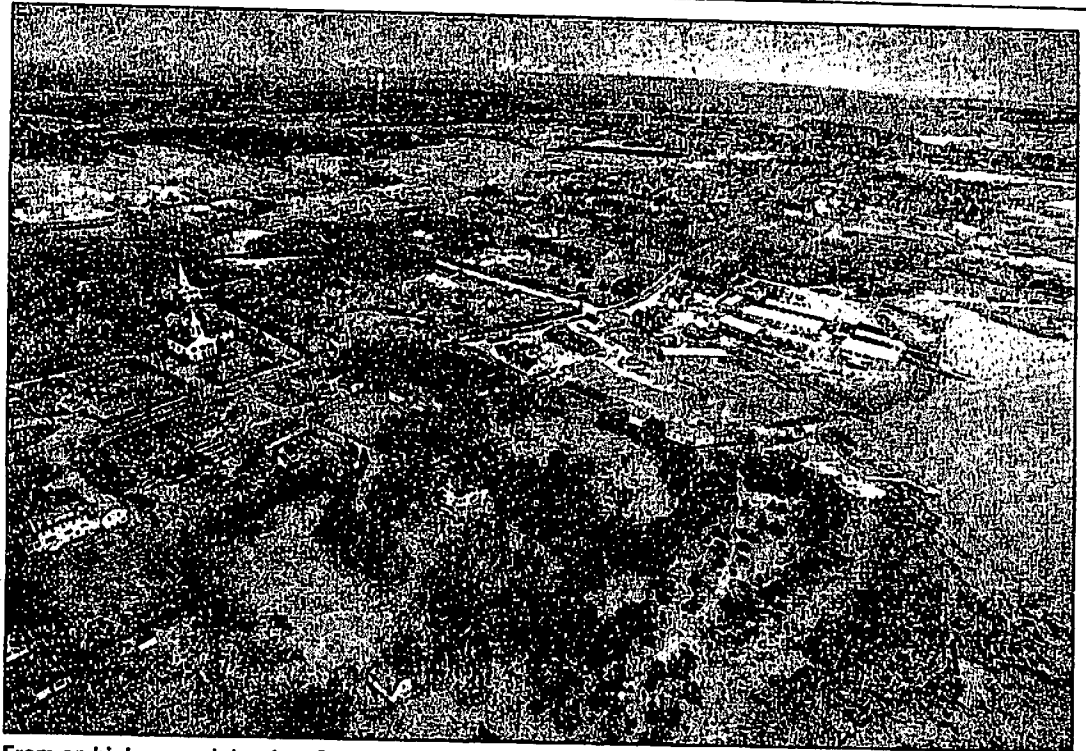
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT Duxbury Clipper

piers," said Hagerty. The electronic map will become a very useful tool for other committees like the recently formed Bay Management Study Committee, he said.

Hagerty worries that "as Duxbury becomes more affluent, having a pier will become just like a three car garage; it's a status symbol versus a necessity that contributes more to resale value than to usefulness." He cited examples of existing piers that have only a two-hour window of use per day due to their location in low tidal areas. He stresses, however, that the committee "is not against all piers; some piers make sense."

Expected Expansion

In addition to the general recreational users of the bay, both the Duxbury Yacht Club and Duxbury Bay Maritime School (DBMS) are attracting many sailors. "The maritime school and yacht club sailing programs add a couple to a few hundred sailboats to the bay on a given day," noted Pearce.



From on high on a winter day, Snug Harbor looks almost barren. This aerial photo was taken in the early 1960s.

(Courtesy J.R. Kent)

tive Director Ned Lawson.

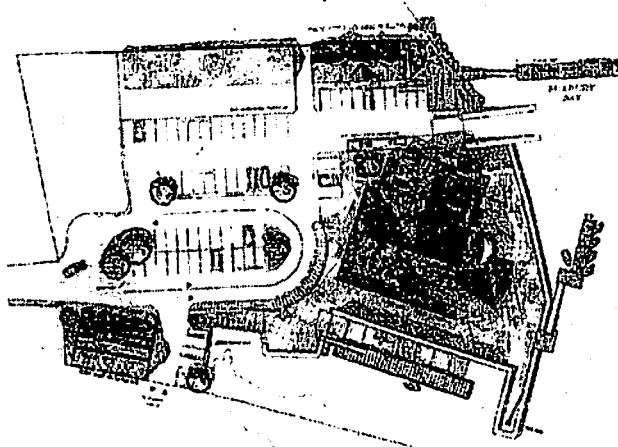
Plans are underway at the DBMS to improve the school's waterfront property by building new classrooms and administrative space, erecting a main-

DBMS to become fully handicapped accessible for its growing ACCESS Sailing program, and to operate programs throughout the year to support a year-round staff and overhead.

"To produce more revenue year round, we will develop programs such as "frostbiting," sailing seminars and conferences, indoor training facilities for rowers, and instructor training," said Lawson.

As part of new construction, the DBMS is currently addressing pollution problems caused by storm drainage runoff on its two-acre site. "It's consistent with our mission because we are cleaning up the water that discharges into the harbor," said Lawson.

The school's neighbor, Bayside Marine, is facing growing pains as well. Jack Kent has plans for construction of a new showroom, store, customer service center and a boat storage building that measures 120 feet by 240 feet with a "peak height off 44.5 feet" on its 4 1/2 acre site. The marina needs a zoning variance to build the storage building, and began the zoning hearing pro-



An architectural sketch indicates the expansion plans of the Duxbury Bay Maritime School. (Courtesy DBMS)

This year, 1500 students participated in DBMS's programs compared to 450 five years ago. The school's facilities are now "undersized and inefficient" due to its continued success. "I consider the maritime school to be a happy part of the problem when it comes to use of the bay," said Execu-

tenance and storage facility for 100 boats, and building a recreational space for a future executive director and instructors. The capital needed to upgrade the Ellison campus is \$5 million "which includes a one million dollar endowment," said Lawson.

Expansion will allow the

ANCHORS AWAY! Duxbury's Moorings

Moorings	Moorings		Residency		
	Available	Assigned	Residents	Non-Residents	Unknown
Basin Deep Water Moorings	176	166	134	26	6
Basin Flats	432	381	257	55	69
Howland's Landing	86	86	50	35	1
Tidal Flats (A)	U/D	166	149	17	0
Total	U/D	799	590	133	76

- (A) Tidal Flats represent moorings located all over the town's waterways.
 (B) "Residency Unknown" is due to change of address or payment failure at the time of calculation.
 (C) There are 10 voids to safeguard anchorage of the deep moorings.
 U/D - Underdetermined as there is no limit to tidal flats moorings.

Source: Mooring information as of August 22, 2002, obtained from Harbormaster Office.

cess this spring.

Bayside currently stores boats on racks "until the customer wants to haul it out," and they are constantly moving them on and off the racks, said Kent. Duxbury residents own most of the 108 boats that were stored here last year, and the marina, said Kent, can accommodate 120 boats. "I will have to get rid of 50 customers if I don't do this plan," said Kent in May of this year.

Kent had sought to change the area's zoning to a Neighborhood Business 4 from its current Neighborhood Business 2 zone at town meeting this spring. He scrapped the article before the meeting; however, because the planning board advised that the change would eliminate the grandfather clause he needed for his current business. This would mean more zoning issues, he said.

"I had no option two, no other plan in place," he said "but I have to do something because the current building structures are falling apart." Kent has decided to resume the hearing process started last May and plans to build a new storefront by razing the back end of the building that now houses Expressions.

The Plan

In 1970, Duxbury residents, under the guidance of Dr. Lansing H. Bennett, the then chairman of the conservation commission, voted unanimously to adopt a conservation policy that would ensure open space for the protection of our water supply, wildlife, social and recreational uses, and to preserve the town's rural character.

Today, another plan is needed to balance conflicting

uses—social, recreational and commercial—to protect our marine environment and safeguard Duxbury Bay. "When it comes to coastal management of this natural resource, there are people who are looking at pieces, but no one who looks at the whole puzzle," said Ned Lawson.

Seeing the need for greater oversight, voters this spring created the Duxbury Bay Management Study Committee. Since May, the 13-member group has met regularly to grapple with issues facing the bay.

"The first several meetings we invited experts from state departments and the UMASS Harbor Institute and others for hearings to give their views and information on several different bay management plans," said chair Margaret Kearney.

At first, the committee found its task "daunting," she said, "but we are now getting a grip on it, and have a feel for what we need to do." Members began by identifying both the users and uses of the bay, and then went on to issues related to water quality and other subjects including the number of moorings, piers and growing aquaculture grants. "Parking we found is a huge issue," said Kearney. "It's inadequate given the various users who are using the bay at all different hours."

The group plans to recommend a town wide survey that will seek public input on how to resolve the issues. "At annual meeting, we'll have a list of recommendations," said Kearney.

Some resources are already available to assist in achieving a base line bay management plan. Other professional expertise will be needed as well, she said, and "there will be an expense attached to that."

The former selectman is personally concerned about preserving the quality of the bay while allowing maximum use by its residents. "The bay is pretty clean as it is, and we need to keep it that way," she said. "It's all a balancing act." ♦